

AGS Accountants and Business Advisors Ltd

Financial Case Study



AGS is one of the most dynamic and innovative firms operating in the West Midlands today, differentiating themselves from their competition through a focus on software, process optimisation and an investment in great people.

A growth strategy based on service development has seen the firm develop from core accounting services to embrace corporate finance, tax planning, financial services, and business and management consulting.

Challenge

Starting as a small practice in 1989, AGS Accountants has been on a journey of growth and innovation, expanding to over 30 employees today. As an accountancy start-up in the late eighties, AGS operated in a fairly non-tech environment with manual processes and paper dominating activities. The acquisition of another accountancy firm in the early 2000s meant that the business needed to share data between employees more efficiently, sparking the need for a technology-driven approach to their operations.

AGS recognised early on that they needed to focus on implementing and integrating software to drive their business forward. However, they found that their efforts were often hampered by slow network connections and an ageing hardware

infrastructure, resulting in resources often being redirected to maintaining and supporting existing IT systems.

For the business to fully capitalise on emerging software being introduced into the accountancy market for their clients, they needed a more dynamic approach to IT delivery; moving staff resources away from maintaining existing IT hardware to focus on more value-add activities.

Solution

Nasstar was recommended to Steve Aston, co-founder of AGS Accountants, as a trusted technology services provider, and in 2002, AGS migrated their systems to Nasstar's fully outsourced IT solution.

"Our focus from the beginning has been on staying ahead of our industry and focusing on how we

Employees

30+

Project Snapshot

Delivery of a fully outsourced IT solution that supports the business to stay ahead of the curve and remain competitive in their market

Applications Hosted

Microsoft Office 365



At the time, it was a leap of faith to move all of our IT to an external hosting provider, but we did our due diligence and felt we could trust Nasstar.

Nasstar on AGS

A firm that saw the transformation potential of managed service from the outset.

A forward thinking accountancy firm who have utilised outsourcing to enhance their strategic move into being a multi-services financial solution.

AGS on Nasstar

A 'no brainer' of a concept executed brilliantly.



We've now worked with them for over sixteen years, and we feel we genuinely trust the team at Nasstar to deliver what they say they will, and to quickly resolve issues should they occur.

can drive innovation across our accountancy services for clients," commented Steve Aston. "At the time, it was a leap of faith to move all of our IT to an external hosting provider, but we did our due diligence and felt we could trust Nasstar. We've now worked with them for over sixteen years, and we feel we genuinely trust the team at Nasstar to deliver what they say they will, and to quickly resolve issues should they occur."

As time has gone on, Nasstar has proactively introduced new solutions to AGS Accountants to support them in staying ahead of the technology curve and remaining competitive in their market.

"Nasstar presented to us the idea of moving to Office 365 within Citrix; all hosted and managed by Nasstar. As accountancy software has become more demanding, it was time to look at a new solution for our IT platforms that could handle bigger software updates and better serve our employees in a more flexible way."

Delivering Office 365 within Citrix to 30 users across the business, combined with VOIP, leased lines and firewall solutions, Nasstar now manages the end to end IT service for AGS Accountants, enabling them to concentrate on their core business and on driving further innovation, supported by technology.

Benefits

"As a business, we're never standing still, and we are always looking for ways to innovate to deliver better and wider services to our clients. Our Business Solutions Centre is an example of how we have innovated from the traditional accountancy practice; delivering a wide range of business services to clients across HR and insurance services, to name but a few. In order to deliver more innovative services, such as our Virtual Accountant service or our Tax app, we need a reliable and secure IT platform underpinning everything we do. That's where Nasstar comes in."

The new Office 365 solution provides further security to the teams at AGS, implementing two-factor authentication for all users and leveraging Microsoft and Citrix's built-in security features. By working with Microsoft, AGS can also capitalise on the investments that Microsoft makes into its products, benefitting from updates and new products being introduced over time. This means that AGS get access to the latest technology in the market to support their future growth.

Moreover, as the firm moves further towards becoming paperless, Office 365 with Citrix will also support AGS' employees by providing them with the software required to migrate away from paper for collaboration and document sharing activities.

Client Verdict

"Working with Nasstar has been different to your standard IT supplier-buyer relationship," says Steve. "We've been on a joint journey of innovation with Nasstar, and both companies have grown and changed since we first engaged with Nasstar in 2002. We've benefitted from Nasstar's own growth and innovation, and we're proud to work with pioneers in the cloud services market. Most importantly, we value the relationship we've developed with key members of the Nasstar team – we trust them and we know they are always just a quick phone call away. As a business owner, that gives me great peace of mind and confidence in my IT."

Today, Steve Aston promotes Nasstar's managed services to other organisations in the accountancy sector through speaking at industry seminars and events, detailing his company's own technology journey and challenges for the finance industry to be aware of.

"Changes in the industry, such as Making Tax Digital and Automatic Enrolment initiatives, are sometimes perceived by accountancy firms as threats to their business," commented Steve. "For us, they represent opportunities because we've invested in a technology platform that can support our business activities, both now and in the future. Our business can flex and adapt to industry changes and trends, such as artificial intelligence, because we have a solid IT foundation in place that supports our innovation efforts as we expand."

"We're only as good as our technology partner, from both a software and hardware perspective. We've been lucky to find a partner in Nasstar who has continued to grow and innovate, and both companies have benefitted from having teams in place who are enthusiastic and committed to innovation and change."



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